



The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

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HARVEST

God be thanked for harvest yield,
Whatever be the sowing:
Wheat that bent with golden weight
Through the summer days;
Corn that ran in endless rows
Yellow-eared and glowing;
Or apples scarlet on the hills
In the autumn haze.

God be thanked for all of these,
But oh, help us remember
Those who have no harvest time,
Those whose hearts are sad;
Who would have toiled the summer
through
For heaped bins in November
If they but could . . . Lord, meet their
need
And some way to make them glad.

God be thanked for yielding fields,
And for strong men to till them;
Grant them faith to plant again,
The winter left behind.
But oh, the empty cupboards, Lord,
Reach out a hand and fill them,
And open up the old lost fields
Of service to mankind.

—Grace Noll Crowell in
Good Housekeeping.

THANKSGIVING SERMON

Thanksgiving! Our own Thanksgiving Day is peculiarly a home day. On that day we take occasion to stop and ponder together on the good things that have come our way during the year or years preceding; we have a chance to even up our account of give and take. But what of the Thanksgiving Days that took place long before Columbus ever set foot on American soil? Has the meaning of the day changed since those

early celebrations took place? Are people of today thankful for the same sort of thing that men of centuries before gave thanks for? If our Thanksgiving is different, how and why is it different?

Our own particular Thanksgiving which the Pilgrims gave us is, of course, indigenous to our own country. Feast days and days of Thanksgiving for national events of progress, however, have been celebrated by every great nation. Mention of the earliest of these is made in the Old Testament; for instance there is that of the Hebrews, whose Thanksgiving Day was established by Jehovah, according to the directions given to Moses: "Thou shalt observe the feast of the tabernacles, seven days after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine." The Greeks celebrated by having a feast in honor of Demeter, the goddess of the cornfield and harvest; the Romans gave similar recognition to Ceres, the goddess of the fields, and the feast itself was accordingly called "Cerealia." Further along in the world's history, Thanksgiving was observed in England in the form of the old English Harvest Home, held at the time of the harvest every year. On this occasion, the Saxon churls and their families gathered from far and wide in this festival of good cheer. Queen Elizabeth went so far as to issue a proclamation of thanksgiving. In fact, the celebration of this sort of Thanksgiving, growing as it did into merely making merry with feasts and games, grew altogether too popular in England. In Cromwell's time there were one hundred such holidays celebrated every year.

This phase of contemporary English life may have had much to do with the decision of the Pilgrims to look else-

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where for a home. They sought to live under conditions which they thought right and just. The continuous revelry of the hundred holidays was not in accord with their earnest view of life. They looked to Holland as a place where they might try a new settlement; but here, too, they found the lack of seriousness which they had deplored in England. Their definition of a holiday was literally a holy day; and in neither country did they find sympathy with the zeal and religious fervor which filled their own lives.

Thus it came about that the first pilgrim Thanksgiving was proclaimed by Governor Bradford, of Massachusetts, in the year of 1623. Even that was not the first Thanksgiving celebrated on American soil. On the Newfoundland coast, in 1578, Frobisher's little colony had set aside a day very much in the same spirit as the Pilgrims were to do; and the Popham colony at Sagadahoc on the Maine coast held a Thanksgiving Day celebration in 1607. The Pilgrim colony, however, was essentially the nucleus of the new American nation; and it is for this reason that we have taken over their Thanksgiving in its spirit and actuality as our people's own.

The hardships and suffering of the little Pilgrim band are so well known as not to need description. A present-day American perhaps wonders what they found to be thankful for on that first Thanksgiving Day. Over a third of their little colony lay buried on the hillside. Fifty-five Pilgrims remained, four of whom were women. Ninety Indians presented themselves as guests at the feast, whom the gentle English folk did not

dare to turn away; and if they could, they would not have, since they might have risked losing a chance for the Indian's conversion. A cold, raw November day, inadequate protection—for their one house had been burned to the ground—one hundred and forty-five hungry men with outdoor appetites waiting to be fed, and wolves lurking about who "sat on their tayles and grinned" at them—who will say that our undaunted Pilgrim mothers had not fighting blood. In the matter of material for the feast they were fortunate. The Indians brought gifts of deer meat, the English strangers were adepts with their firearms, and the vegetables and meal from the grain which they had raised themselves, help to add variety to the meal. In the matter of turkeys we of today may well envy them. Morton wrote, "Turkies there are, which divers times in great flocks have sallied by our doors; and then a gunne (being commonly in redinesse) salutes them with such courtesie, as makes them take a turne in the Cooke room. They daunce by the door so well! Of these there have been killed, that have weighed forty-eight pound a piece."

Since 1863, a national proclamation of Thanksgiving has been issued each year. All our dependencies celebrate in common with us, so that our Pilgrim Thanksgiving is an event once a year at least half way around the world.

It is easy to realize that this is a very different world to live in from that of the earliest Thanksgiving Days in Old Testament times. This country has seen many revolutionary changes since the time that the Pilgrim Fathers landed. Aside from differences in population, the contrast between the Pilgrims' times, dating from 1620, even at their best in England, when compared with our own is remarkable.

Newspapers were introduced as late as 1663. Coaches were the only means of travel in the seventeenth century. Medicine was at that stage where the death rate was one person in every seventeen. Farmers raised on an aver-

age seven bushels of grain to the acre. Machinery played a very small part in the mechanics of living. With such likelihood of early death near, with no means of breaking the isolation which lack of traveling facilities necessitated, with few or no books to read, with food hard to provide, with little help of any kind save human hands, the man of the seventeenth century lived in a narrow, perilous world. Such privations, however, did not compare with the lack of personal freedom which he was bound to endure. Is it any wonder that this little group of far-sighted Puritans made the break which meant that they at least would have mental and spiritual freedom, if they had no physical comfort?

In the world of today, where we may know within an hour what men on the other side of the world are doing, where it is only a question of a brief time before we can reach that side ourselves, where medicine has taken a new turn of prevention as well as cure, where agricultural science has raised the yield of the food crop many fold, where modern inventions save time and effort that may well be spent upon the artistic and beautiful side of life—in this world a Pilgrim would find himself quite at a loss. With his keen and searching eyes, would he find, I wonder, any phases in our modern life which would fill him with the same revolt that stirred his soul back in the seventeenth century?

His was a severe test, perhaps a harsh one. It is a question, however, whether we have a right to adopt this holy day of his for our own, without adopting, too, his attitude of humility and earnest thankfulness for the good things that God has given us.

—Rev. D. E. Cleveland in
The Air Pilot.

A very large part of the companionship of friends is listening to what they are saying; even more than speaking. The same thing is true in our communion with God. Prayer is one-half listening to what God desires us to do.

THANKSGIVING

We thank Thee, O Father, for all that is bright—

The gleam of the day, and the stars of the night,

The flowers of our youth and the fruits of our prime,

And the blessings that march down the pathway of time.

We thank Thee, O Father, for all that is drear—

The sob of the tempest, the flow of the tear;

For never in blindness and never in vain,
Thy mercy permitted a sorrow or pain.

We thank Thee, O Father, for song and for feast,

The harvest that glowed and the wealth that increased!

For never a blessing encompassed earth's child,

But Thou in Thy mercy looked downward and smiled.

We thank Thee, O Father of all, for the power

Of aiding each other in life's darkest hour;

The generous heart and the bountiful hand

And all the soul help that sad souls understand.

We thank Thee, O Father, for days yet to be—

For hopes that our future will call us to Thee—

That all our eternity form, through Thy love,

One Thanksgiving Day in the mansions above.

—Selected.

Happy is the man who believes in his fellow, for it is more blessed to be deceived in some things than to be suspicious in all things.

—“John the Unafraid.”

Love is blind. It feels and warms; it does not look at you.—*Deeping.*

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

Letters should be addressed to Mrs. Laura M. Hurst, 78 Penfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Persons writing to the Department for the first time should always give as reference the name and address of their minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

APPEALS

1. I have a little grandchild 8 months old whose mother died when she was only 8 days old. I would love to have something for the little babe for Christmas. Maggie Richardson, Brandon, N. C.

2. Mrs. Sibley Sayer, Rayle, Ga., is always very happy to receive books and magazines to read during her leisure time.

3. I want to thank all who remembered me last Christmas and hope I will be remembered the next as I am all alone in the world and have a hard time. Samantha Barr, Applegrove, N. C.

4. Mrs. Julia Jarnell, 5640 Kiam St., Houston, Tex., would be very grateful for embroidery work, thread, or reading matter.

5. My children are in the first, third, and fourth grades. They would appreciate anything to help them in their schoolwork. I would like sewing material and magazines. Mrs. Roy Coppenger, Rt. 1, Tellico Plains, Tenn.

6. Mrs. George R. Rakes, Buffalo Ridge, Va., could make good use of pieces of thread, buttons, and pictures of all kinds.

7. I am a widow, 66 years of age, and

in very poor health. I would be so glad to get some sugar or flour sacks, knitting, or reading. Mrs. Lafayette Swanson, Rt. 1, Boomer, N. C.

8. Miss Alpha Vaughan, Box 44, Buffalo Ridge, Va., enjoys fancy work and good books to while away the lonesome hours.

9. Mrs. W. B. Thompson, Unionville, Va., would appreciate it if some of the *Cheerful Letter* friends would send her some interesting books to read as she has been sick since May and unable to do any work.

10. I want to send my thanks to the friends who have been so nice to me in my lonely days. I would be grateful for scrapbooks, yarn, and magazines. Mrs. Nancy Autry, Crabtree, Ark.

11. Mrs. Joe Prefitt, Sand Lick, Litchen Co., Ky., is anxious to receive stamped pieces, jig-saw puzzles, and bits of thread.

12. My neuritis is so bad I can scarcely get across the floor and sewing and knitting is the most I can do. Also my husband has been ill for over six months. I would appreciate notebooks and pencils for an orphan boy of 13 years. Mrs. Joe Dodd, Rt. 1, Box 134, Amherst, Va.

13. Mrs. Verda Lester, R.F.D. 2, Price, N. C., writes that she would like to hear from more of her *Cheerful Letter* friends. Any kind of handiwork or reading would be most helpful.

14. I hope that my little girls, 3 and 5 years old, will be remembered again this Christmas. I should love thread, ends of ribbon and lace and magazines. Mrs. Glen Sullivan, Whitetop, Va.

15. Mrs. Fairie Bailey, Kensett, Ark., is a young married woman with a 9 months' old daughter. She loves to sew and do fancy work.

16. I am looking forward to receiving books, picture postcards, or anything else you think would cheer me. Mrs. Lina Jerles, Calhoun, Tenn.

17. None but my Father in Heaven can ever know what you all have meant to me in my thirty-one years of invalidism. I would appreciate crocheting, knitting, etc., for myself; school materials for my little granddaughter who has just started school; and suitable books for a girl in the seventh grade who also lives with me. Mrs. Beulah Moore, Rt. 1, Lawsonville, N. C.

18. Mrs. Maggie Sorrell, R.F.D. 2, Unionville, Va., would be very glad to receive reading matter, writing paper, and sewing materials.

19. I would be pleased if someone would send me buttons, silk or cotton pieces for cushion tops, and magazines to help me forget my suffering. Mrs. A. C. Hottinger, Box 67, Hebron, Ohio.

20. Mrs. Bernard Wallace, Rt. 1, Box 95B, Glasgow, Va., writes that she would like pieces of pencils and tablets for her little boy who is starting school this year. She says she lost her hog the same week her son broke his arm so it seems as if bad luck was coming her way.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Mrs. Walter Hurley from Pylesville to Belair, Md.

Mrs. Jesse C. Broadway from Rt. 2, Norwood, to East Albemarle, N. C.

Mrs. Ella Simmons from Athens to

Rt. 1, Cayuga, Tex.

Mrs. George R. Rakes from Dodson to Buffalo Ridge, Va.

Mrs. Maggie Sorrell from Granite Springs to Unionville, Va.

NOTICE TO SHUT-INS

Members of the Cheerful Letter Exchange desiring Christmas cheer are urged to get their letters off to Mrs. Hurst by November 27. There is a goodly supply of used Christmas cards on hand and we are anxious to place them where they can be used. Mention this in your letter if you are interested. Please do *not* ask for clothing or money. It is against our rules and all letters containing requests or suggestions for either are discarded to the waste basket at once. These letters cannot be published but every letter will receive some attention, either from Headquarters or from your correspondent, provided you are a regular member.

THANKSGIVING

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.—Psalms 16:6.

We give thanks, O Lord, for the pleasant places, the goodly heritage. We are the heir to all the ages. Other men have labored and we enter into their labors. All the resources of industry, of science, of art, of literature, are at our command.

We give thanks for the opportunities that thus have come to us; the opportunities to have happy homes illumined with friendship and love, suffused with the myriad sides of culture; the opportunities to do useful work, to contribute our part to the complex fabric of civilization, to serve the present age.

We give thanks for the great adventure of living, with all its risks of joy and sorrow. If happiness be our portion, may we accept it with joyous hearts; if sorrow, may we find strength to fulfill our obligation with courage, knowing that in so doing, happiness will break through. —*The White Bear Press.*

THE PRICE OF A LAUGH

Back in 1359 a wizened little clerk was a guest in the English army, which was besieging a French town. He held no military rank. He was neither a soldier nor a nobleman. He was a scribbler of rhymes. Yet martial leaders lavished favors on him; and the king pensioned him. This in an age that gave scant regard to scribblers or to clerks.

The little man was one Geoffrey Chaucer. Whenever a knight or a private soldier or a body of troops flinched at charging a perilous breach in the city wall, Geoffrey would write a scurrilous set of verses, guying the act of cowardice. By the next day, the whole camp was singing or reciting the verses; and their victim or victims were laughed into fresh courage.

In brief, they would rather be shot at than laughed at. So would you. So would I.

That is a queer phase of this queerer human nature of ours. It has cost much. Indeed, it has changed the history of the world. Sometimes the price of a laugh—or of its avoidance—has meant the slamming of the door in the face of fortune or of fame or even of immortality. Sometimes those who were willing to pay the price of a laugh have won greatness and wealth.

Napoleon Bonaparte was the master of continental Europe. He yearned to be master of the whole world. But he first must win England, and to win England he first must cross the English Channel in force. If only he had battle-craft which could ignore wind and current and tide and which could out-travel and out-maneuver the opposing British frigates!

Just at that juncture, there came to his court a shaggy-haired young American inventor, Robert Fulton by name. Fulton had worked out a practical invention whereby ships could be propelled by steam, instead of by sails; and could travel independent of cross-currents and adverse winds.

Also he had worked out a serviceable submarine torpedo boat. He made suc-

cessful tests of both these inventions, to the satisfaction of Napoleon's most skeptical naval experts.

The problem was solved. It was Napoleon's life-opportunity. He dallied longingly with the project. Then he rejected it.

If it should fail, Napoleon feared he would be the laughing-stock of Europe, and would lose much prestige. He could not afford to be laughed at. So he refused to pay the price of a laugh; and incidentally he threw away world conquest.

A Genoese mariner, one Christopher Columbus, worked out a logical plan whereby he might "reach the east by sailing west." He carried his project to the Portuguese court. Portugal, just then, was Spain's rival for the colonial supremacy of the known earth.

King John of Portugal saw that the success of the scheme might make Portugal the greatest of all nations. Tentatively, he agreed to send Columbus on the expedition. But his councillors showed King John that he would be laughed at from one end of Europe to the other if he should finance such a crazy enterprise. So Columbus was sent away.

The mariner went next to Portugal's rival nation, Spain. There, too, the wise men laughed loudly at his idea. But Queen Isabella was not afraid of being laughed at. She declared she would pawn her jewels, if necessary, to back the expedition.

As a result of her contempt for laughter, America was discovered. By reason of that discovery, Spain became the richest and strongest nation in Europe. Portugal, by contrast, dwindled presently into a third-rate power. The nation which flinched from paying the price of a laugh, lost its last chance at supremacy.

A college professor worked for many years on an invention, and at last perfected it. He tramped New England, trying to interest capital and political influence in this device of his for making the human voice travel for miles along a wire. He was Alexander Graham Bell.

He called his invention The Telephone.

Bell knew he was right. Scientists had admitted he was right. He was sorely in need of money to float his invention. But most of the neighbors laughed at him. It was, of course, plumb idiotic to suppose the human voice could be carried along a wire and be heard for many miles or even for a single mile. Imagine what the yearly income would be, today, of one of those wise laugh-dodgers if, in the 1870's, he had invested \$10,000 in telephone stock!

The instances could be piled up, of persons and nations which have laughed away the chance for wealth and for greatness, and for other forms of success, lest they be made fun of. I am not speaking of visionary schemes, bred in the brains of cranks or of charlatans; but of things whose foursquare values had been established past all doubt. But the world at large stood aloof, shunning what Solomon called "the laughter of fools."

Sometimes I have tried to analyze what it is which makes us so afraid of being laughed at. Ten million people could be ranged up in front of us and could be hired to laugh derisively at us for twenty-four hours at a stretch. At the end of the time not one of us would be a penny the worse for their mirth. But we stand in mortal terror of it. There is a mystery to it all; something I can't fathom, though its existence can no more be denied than can the sun's. Men and women, who can prove themselves heroes in great crises, tremble before derision.

If you are a man, why do you stop wearing your becoming and comfortable straw hat, just because the calendar happens to register September 15th? To avert a laugh you sacrifice comfort and becomingness.

If you are a woman—. Well, Mrs. John Smith was adorably attractive, in the styles of three years ago. Those styles brought out all her grace and charm. In today's styles she looks like a Minor Misfortune. And she knows it. Did she risk being laughed at by sticking to the costume which beautified her? Not

she. Eagerly she has made herself ugly. Why? To keep up to date, of course, and thus avert a laugh.

Last year's car runs better and more smoothly than does a brand new one, but it must be turned in for a new model. We can't afford to be laughed at for not keeping up to date.

Dare you stride into the new Waldorf, some day when you aren't hungry and when indigestion gnaws at your inner man, and order nothing but a bowl of crackers and milk? More especially, dare you do that if you are with a group of acquaintances? That is an ideal diet for you, at such a time. Besides, it is comfortably cheap. You flinch from the possible grins of your tablemates and from those of people at other tables. Above all, you dread the waiters' derision.

What harm can a laugh do us? Can it make us lose our jobs or our self-respect? Yet we shun it, as something poisonous. We pay exorbitant prices in cash and in comfort to avoid it.

We know that those who have braved the world's laughter have sometimes risen to dizzy heights. Yet we plod along; discarding myriads of pleasant or profitable or inspiring things which are offered to us by Fate or by Man; all in the wincing terror of being laughed at.

Is it worth the price? I think nearly everyone will say "No!" But I think nearly everyone—including myself, perhaps—will keep on doing it.

—Albert Payson Terhune in
The Elks Magazine.

NOW ARE THE VALLEYS SOFTENED

Now are the valleys softened
And distance lost to sight
In golden dust of sunset
Before the peace of night.
Gone is the toil of noonday,
Far is the dream of sleep;
The day and night blend slowly
And earth in wonder steep.
Light of the sun has vanished,
The darkness has no star;
The winds of time are silent
As earth and heaven are.

—Albert V. Fowler.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS Who Play and Work Together

"We have been noticing how nicely your boys take care of their little sister when they are out playing," said a neighbor to a mother who had recently moved to a new locality. "Some of the other neighbors have noticed it, too. The boys are never rough with her. You can always feel perfectly safe to leave her in their care."

The mother naturally was pleased at the praise of her sons and also at the assurance that whether anyone was watching them or not the boys were gentle and kind to their sister.

There had been almost a tone of surprise in the neighbor's remarks, as if it were unusual for boys to be kind to a younger child, or for brothers to be considerate of a sister. The happy companionship on which the neighbor had commented was what this mother had planned for ever since the children had begun to play together. The boys were encouraged to do things to please the little girl, to plan surprises for her, and to let her share in their play whenever possible. On the other hand the little girl was gently but firmly trained not to expect her brothers always to include her in their activities or to give up all their cherished plans if she could not join in them. The mother had tried to keep a perfectly fair balance between brother and sister, between boy and girl, for she felt that any injustice on either side might lead to that regrettable lack of affection and courtesy sometimes apparent between brothers and sisters.

Both boys and girl had their separate toys and games, their own particular equipment and material for working out their ideas and for creative play, and neither were allowed to meddle with the other's things. Spontaneous sharing was encouraged, but not demanded, which sometimes makes all the difference between happiness and resentment. Just as an adult expects to knock at another person's door before entering, or to ask permission to use a friend's pen, pencil or telephone, so the two sons and the daughter were taught respect for each

other's belongings and natural courtesy in using them. The result was a harmony and congeniality between the little girl and her brothers which was good to see, and which would exert a happy influence over their own later years.

Sometimes parents do not realize that a sense of injustice rankles for years in the heart of a boy or girl because of some childhood distinction or apparent favoritism.

"Are you trying to turn your girls into boys and vice versa?" said a friend with an amused smile to the mother of a vigorous growing family. "Your children's duties seem to be interchangeable. While I have been here Robert has set the table and Louise has brought up the kindling for the fireplace. Frank has made a cake and Mary has shoveled the snow from the piazza. I am quite bewildered at the method, but I will admit that the result is admirable. When I was a child I had to stay in from play many a time to help in the kitchen, but my brother would have been insulted if he had been asked to wipe a dish."

"That is just it," said the mother emphatically. "I'll never forget how unfair it seemed to me to have to go in early every night to help get supper, while my two brothers, one older and one younger, could stay out until the last minute. They got all the out-of-door work in which I should like to have helped and I got all the housework. Consequently, they grew up not knowing how to sew on a button or to get a meal, if they were alone and hungry, and I grew up with a great distaste for housework. Therefore I am trying to find a better way for my own children. Of course, the girls are not allowed to do heavy work which might overtax their strength, but otherwise the boys and girls take their turns at helping me, either indoors or out of doors. One week a girl comes in early to help get dinner and the next week a boy takes his turn."

If a brother who had been working hard all day came home late, then a sister got his dinner and made him comfortable. If a sister was going to a party, one of her brothers was ready to escort

her or to do last-minute service. The college brother helped the high school sister with her algebra problems, and perhaps the next evening she made candy and sandwiches for a group of his friends. If the boys had an unexpected invitation to an outing, their sisters hurried to help them get ready, put up lunches, packed a suitcase and find various necessary but mislaid articles. If the girls were entertaining, the brothers made themselves agreeable and provided flowers or a special treat. All such affairs were entirely in charge of the boys and girls themselves, and the busy mother, having planted the seeds of reciprocation in their minds when they were children, had only to enjoy the pleasant results.

"A little teasing is fun, but much teasing is fatal," said one mother, speaking of the attitude of brothers and sisters toward each other. "I have tried to be wise in this matter, for it seems to me it is more important than parents sometimes realize. Good-natured chaffing, harmless jokes on each other's fancies and foibles, stingless laughter at natural mistakes or absurdities merely liven and brighten the atmosphere, but that is as far as teasing should go. A child should learn to laugh at himself, to enjoy with others a joke at his own expense, for this gives him or her a certain strength and poise, but too much teasing may breed an antagonism between the young folks when they should be friends. There should be a light-hearted give-and-take and a wholesome sense of fun among young folks, but parents may help to avoid misunderstanding and trouble, between brothers and sisters especially, if they firmly refuse to allow teasing to be carried beyond the limit of friendliness and kindness."

The relation between brother and sister has fine possibilities, and this natural bond may be strengthened and deepened until it becomes one of the rare, precious benefits of family life. When there are both boys and girls in a family, parents have the opportunity of helping them grow to understand each other, and to complement each other's natures so that

difficulties are halved and joys are doubled. Some of the finest friendships in the world have been those between brothers and sisters.

—*Lydia Lion Roberts in
Christian Science Monitor.*

THE GRATEFUL HEART

"A grateful thought toward heaven is of itself a prayer," says Lessing.

The grateful heart was evinced constantly in our Lord's earthly life. We see it first of all among the common places: "He took bread and when He had given thanks, etc." Such thanksgiving turns any ordinary meal into a sacrament. As soon as any man lifts his voice in praise over the common bread he links the common bread with the Giver; and thus makes it of sacramental value. It is a recognition and acknowledgment that God is the Giver and that we are morally and spiritually obligated to manifest a grateful heart.

It is sometimes difficult to make ourselves realize our indebtedness to the Giver of all the blessings of life. We have become so accustomed to receiving such that we take them as a matter of course. It is only the uncommon and extraordinary blessings that awaken us to God's goodness, and very often we take these also as our due and fail to express thanks.

The setting aside of a day like Thanksgiving Day is to remind us of our indebtedness to God. Let us take advantage of it and cultivate a grateful heart.

A Hungarian girl's trousseau consists of eighteen pillows, nine with linen and nine with silk covers, three mattresses, five richly embroidered sheets, three bed covers, thirty shirts, twenty-seven blouses, twelve silk kerchiefs, twelve scarves and a dress for baking bread. On the wedding day everything is loaded high on a cart and driven through the whole village, so that all can admire.

"Duty belongs to us, conclusions with God."

WITH OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

RABBIT ROUND

"It has been a long time," said Mother Rabbit, "since I have seen a Fairy."

Every little Rabbit pricked up his ears—and very long ears they were—for there is no young creature that does not love to hear even the name of Fairy. The little Rabbits, Bun, Son, Fun, Hon, Run, and Little One, all wiggled long soft ears, hoping to hear more.

"They will never come unless there is a Fairy Ring," said Mother Rabbit.

Not a little Rabbit had ever heard before of a Fairy Ring, but all sat up straight and still, except that every now and then everyone wiggled an ear.

"Rabbits are the only creatures in the world that can make a Fairy Ring," announced Mother Rabbit.

The ears of all the little Rabbits flopped down, for not one knew how to make a Fairy Ring; so how could a Fairy Ring be made?

"If Dad Rabbit will help us, we shall make a Fairy Ring tonight," asserted Mother Rabbit.

Every little Rabbit's ears went right up; for whatever Mother Rabbit promised was done, and surely Dad Rabbit would help!

When the moon rose—a small and curved new moon—Dad Rabbit came home with a hop, skip, and jump.

"Yes, indeed," said Dad Rabbit when Mother Rabbit asked him if he would lead that night in making a Fairy Ring. Did not the Rabbit Family know how to make Fairy Rings? Were not the Fairy Rings made by the particular Rabbit Family of which he came the best and roundest of Fairy Rings? Was this not just the time to make magic circles when spring was here with breeze, sunshine, and new life in all growing things?

Hours passed, and though every little Rabbit tried not to nod, everyone had fallen fast asleep and had had a good nap when Mother Rabbit went the rounds of her little family and touched every one with a soft furry paw. By nature and training every little Rabbit

knew how to wake at less than a word and how to be alert on the instant; so up at a touch they were, eager to make a Fairy Ring, which, it seemed, it was Rabbits' business to make.

Wide-awake all, away they started, Dad Rabbit in the lead. He called each little Rabbit by name in the order he wanted them to follow him: "Bun, Son, Fun, Hon, Run, and Little One." Mother Rabbit brought up the rear. With a hop, skip, and jump the procession went toward the deep woods. They went further and further, till Dad Rabbit brought them to a place in the forest where the trees left a spot bare and sunny enough for grass to creep in and grow. There Dad Rabbit stopped short in his tracks. Every little Rabbit stopped short in his tracks. Mother Rabbit stopped short in her tracks.

"Here," said Dad Rabbit, "we shall make the Fairy Ring."

"You could not have chosen a better place," approved Mother Rabbit.

Every little Rabbit wondered how they were to make a Fairy Ring, but Rabbits are no great talkers; so as Dad Rabbit and Mother Rabbit had sat down on their haunches to rest, every little Rabbit did the same. They sat as still as still, only now and then wagging a long, soft ear. They sat quite still until every little Rabbit's four legs, the short forelegs and the long hind legs, felt rested and ready to run ten miles if need be.

Then suddenly Dad Rabbit jumped to the midst of the open space in the forest, where grass might creep and grow, and called: "Follow me!"

Around he ran, making in the middle of the open space a perfect circle. He called his children by name in the order in which he wished them to follow him: "Bun, Son, Fun, Hon, Run, and Little One!"

Every little Rabbit jumped to his place as called, all following right in the tracks of Dad Rabbit. Swiftly, swiftly they sped, as swiftly as the wheels of

cotton gins fly in ginning season.

"Dame Dew, gentle one, help us!" breathed Dad Rabbit as he sped.

Every little Rabbit and Mother Rabbit breathed the same words. Round and round they sped. No bird could fly faster than these Rabbits ran.

"Rider Wind, help us!" whispered Dad Rabbit. Every little Rabbit whispered the same request to the strong one.

"Drummer Rain, help us!" murmured Dad Rabbit. Every little Rabbit echoed the murmur to the noisy one.

"Last Autumn Grass, busy one, help us!" pleaded Dad Rabbit. Every little Rabbit repeated that plea.

"Sister Sunshine, merry one, help us!" conjured Dad Rabbit. Every little Rabbit made the same entreaty. None paused a moment or made a misstep as they spun round the circle. Not till Rabbit paws and Rabbit claws had made a wide and perfect circle, made the ground of that Ring so loose and as carefully prepared as if hoe and spade had prepared the soil for sowing of seed therein did Dad Rabbit stop. He stopped as suddenly as he had started. Out of the circle edge he leaped. Out of that Ring every little Rabbit and Mother Rabbit leaped, just as Dad Rabbit had done. With a hop, skip, and jump all came in a bunch together under a spreading Live Oak tree, and there they sat to rest after the running till going-home time.

Dame Dew did help to make the Fairy Ring, for she sent up drops clear as crystal to dampen the circle edge that Rabbit claws and Rabbit paws had made. Last Autumn Grass helped, for it loosened the seed it had made in summer and had held all Winter. Rider Wind helped—he came rushing along and seized the seeds Autumn Grass now so lightly held and scattered them in the pulverized Ring of earth. Drummer Rain helped—he came tumbling from the sky and beat the scattered seed firmly into the circle of soil made soft. Sister Sunshine did her part—she warmed the seed and the earth where Rain had beaten them down.

Later, there in the open space in the forest where grass could creep and

grow, there was to be seen by any and all who passed that way a circle of green, green grass; greener, oh, much greener, than any other grass in the whole world! Any and all who passed and saw that circle cried: "A Fairy Ring!"

Did the Fairies come to dance therein? Did the Rabbits see the Fairies dancing there? Ah, who can tell? But anyone can tell that after the Rabbit Round grows green, there is no more snow that year.

—*Martha Young in
The Christian Register.*

THE TRUE THANKSGIVING

When, out of the gates of dreamland, my feet came slipping slow,
And I felt the radiant morning around me glow and grow;
Up from my heart, half-wakened, ascended all untaught,
The loving and thankful tribute of swift, unspoken thought.

Then, fain in its tracks to follow, my tardier tongue sent words.
To soar to the courts of Heaven, like a flock of singing birds,
Bearing their eager message of gratitude and praise
To the Father of love and blessing, who loveth us always.

But what was the whispered answer that, down from the heights afar,
Slid through the deeps of azure as drops a falling star?

"Dear to the heart of the Father, O child, is thy thought of Him,
And sweet in His ears the music of grateful prayer and hymn;

"But the feet that run with His bidding to many an humble door,
And the hands that make ready a banquet for the outcast and the poor—
These keep the true Thanksgiving and, when the feast is spread,
Mid the least and lowest the Master sits down at the table's head!"

—*Stansbury.*

KEEP THEM SHINING

"The World Will Never Seem Quite Right Unless You Keep Your Glasses Bright."

That piece of wisdom was found on an old spectacle-wiper. Who said it originally may never be known, but it must have been an optimist who had observed pessimists and heard their wailing.

Paul may have had some such idea at the back of his mind when he wrote, "Now we see through a glass, darkly." The mirror was befogged with human limitations, and he could not see the glories of the eternal world. And so it is today. The intimations of heaven are faint shadows compared with the reality we shall behold "when the clouds are rolled away."

But even in human affairs we do not see things as they are because our mental glasses are befogged or dirty. We see the dark side of things because the dark side is in our minds, and we worry, not because things are really desperate, but because we think they are.

The cure? Cleanse the glasses! Polish them morning by morning and day by day with faith. Believe in God and trust Him. Polish them with hope. Look for better days. Polish them with love, which is best of all—love to God, love of your fellow men. Use also meekness, gentleness, goodness, truth, humility, and other virtues. Life will be miserable if your glasses are opaque. Shine them with the cleansing power of confidence in God.

—Robert P. Anderson.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

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ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

WHERE TO WRITE

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